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# Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin

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No. 97



Gold Breast Plaque, Kneeling Isis, from Pyramid X, tomb of Netaqlabataman. Length, 17 cm.

## Known and Unknown Kings of Ethiopia\*

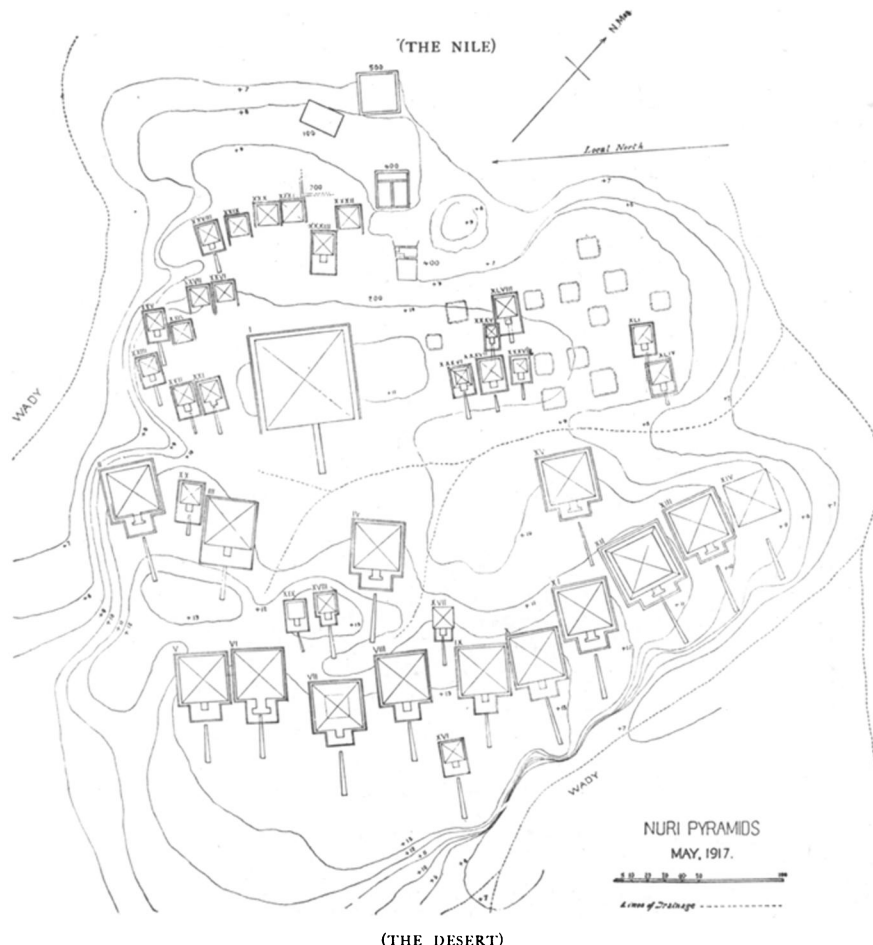
Excavation of the Royal Cemetery at Nuri, 1916-1918: from the Report of Dr. George A. Reisner, Director of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition.

**I**N the writings of the Greeks and the Romans Ethiopia was a region of the gods, of marvelous peoples, and of incredible customs. Long accounts of this mysterious country were gathered from various sources and recorded by Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Pliny. Most of these tales related to the second, the Meroitic Kingdom of Ethiopia, and being current in Rome in the first century A. D., moved the Emperor Nero to send an exploring party of Roman soldiers to Meroe, the capital, and to the lands southward of Meroe. But even before the time of Herodotus Ethiopia had its place in the imagination of the ancients. It is mentioned in the Iliad as a land of the gods, and its people are included among the descendants of Ham in the list of races given in Genesis

(Chap. 10). In the Bible, as in the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions, Ethiopia is called Cush; but in Genesis and Chronicles, Cush of the Nile Valley is confused, as sometimes happens in modern books, with Cush of Mesopotamia or with Cush of Arabia.

A hundred years ago the Englishmen, Hanbury and Waddington, and the Frenchman, Cailliaud, following in the wake of the army of Mohammed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, journeyed into the Sudan to seek the long-lost Island of Meroe. Cailliaud alone was successful. To his delight, he found not only Meroe, but the older capital, Napata, and many other sites with pyramids, temples, and the ruins of cities. However fantastic the tales which the classical writers had handed down, Ethiopia *was* a land in which a great kingdom and a peculiar civilization had once flourished. Since that time the decipherment of the hieroglyphic and the cuneiform inscriptions of Egypt and Assyria and the scientific excavation of a number of the ancient sites of Ethiopia have given us a more intimate knowledge of the people and the history of this remote country. But previous to 1916 there were still two periods lost in obscurity. The earlier of these still remains a blank,—that is, the time between Herihor, the last known Egyptian viceroy of Ethiopia (1090 B. C.), and Piankhy the Great, the king of Ethiopia who conquered Egypt in 721 B. C. The history of the second

\*Ethiopia is the classical name of the region in northeastern Africa which borders the Red Sea and lies between Egypt on the north and Abyssinia on the south. Whatever the derivation of the name, to the Greeks it described "sun-burned faces"—*αιθελιν*, to burn; *ωψ*, face. Modern Nubia includes a large part of Ethiopia. On a map of Nubia reproduced with an article by Dr. Reisner in the Bulletin for April, 1914, the site of Napata, the capital of the first kingdom of Ethiopia, will be found at the centre of the letter S formed by the Nile in its passage from Khartoum to Wady Halfa. The city was built near the sacred mountain, Gebel Barkal, in the eleventh century B. C., and was destroyed by the Persians in the sixth century B. C. Meroe, the capital of the later Ethiopian kingdom from the sixth century onward, lies on the Nile "sixty camel hours" southeast from Napata and about one hundred miles below Khartoum. The "Island of Meroe" is the region east of Khartoum, comprised between the Nile and its tributary, the Atbara. The map of Nubia shows Nuri across the river from Gebel Barkal.



*Map of Nuri Pyramids, showing the tombs excavated during the season 1916-1917*

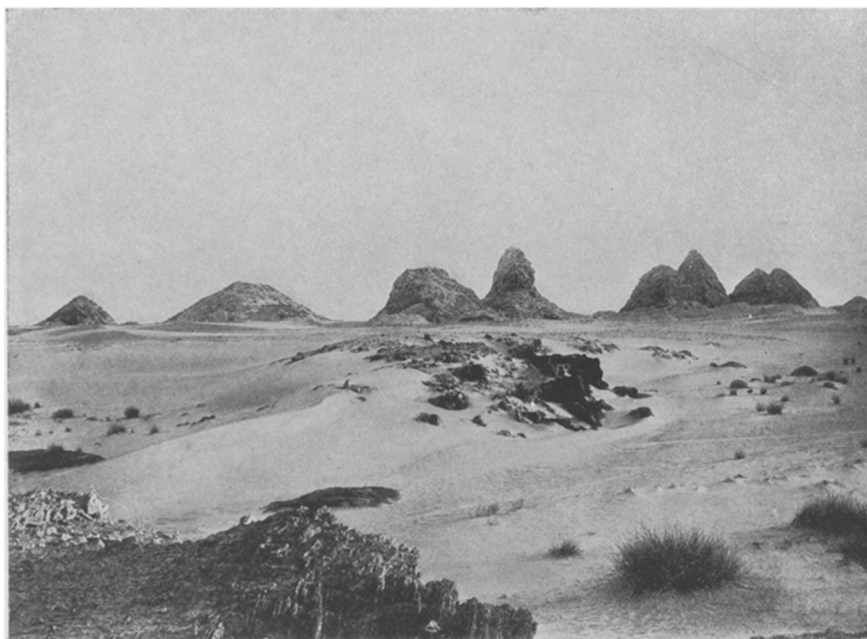
period, however, has now been recovered in its main outlines by the excavation of the pyramids at Nuri. This second, hitherto obscure, period extends from the expulsion of Tanutaman, the nephew of Piankhy, from Egypt by the Assyrians in 661 B. C. to the reign of Ergamenes, King of Ethiopia and friend of Ptolemy II, or about 250 B. C.

If one stands on top of Gebel Barkal with the scene of our excavations of 1915-1916\* at his feet and looks away up-stream, one sees the pyramids of Nuri rising from the edge of the desert behind the fringe of palms and other trees which line the opposite bank of the Nile. The river is flowing to the southwest; and as the directions in the Nile valley are named by the natives from the local course of the river, now as in ancient times, the terms "north," "south," "east," and "west" do not designate the points of the compass but down-stream, up-stream, to the right and to the left of the river. Thus Nuri lies about five miles "south" of Gebel Barkal and must have been just outside the "southernmost" limits of the city of Napata. The township of Nuri is a fairly rich

little district with fields of wheat, barley, maize, and millet, and with many trees, mainly date-palms, dom-palms, and acacias. The village, among the trees along the river bank, is a straggling line of mud-huts with a few better built houses, also of mud, and a couple of mud-built mosques. On the edge of the desert, not far behind the village, the pyramids of Nuri stand in a dense group on a low knoll which has the form of a rough horseshoe with the open end turned "southwards" (up-stream). In that direction lies a bend in the river from which countless dunes of river-sand, driven by the wind, issue forth and cover the alluvial plain and the pyramid field. One of our greatest difficulties was the labor of cutting through these dunes to get at the stairways which led down to the underground chambers of the pyramids. It was only by the nicest calculation that we managed in almost every case to dig down directly over the stairway.

On the "eastern" arm of the horseshoe (toward the Nile), stood the largest pyramid of all (52 meters square), surrounded on the "north," the "east," and the "south" by a large number of very small pyramids (7 to 12 meters square). On the curve of the horseshoe and on its "western" arm (toward

\*Described in the Bulletin of June, 1917.



*The Nuri Pyramids, seen from the "north" (down-stream)*



*The Sand Dunes, "south" (up-stream) from the Pyramid Field*



*Pyramid I. Tomb of Tirhaqa looking "east" (toward the Nile)  
with tomb of Senkamanseken, Pyramid III, in foreground. After the excavations*

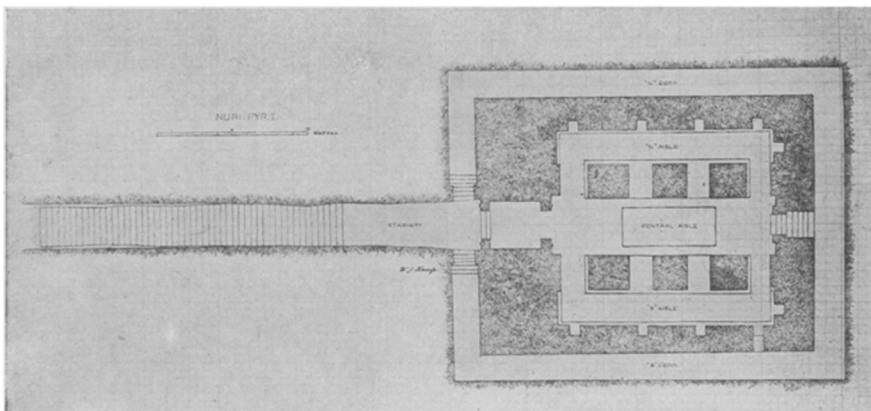
the desert), there were fourteen large pyramids and five small ones. One of the fourteen large pyramids had been identified in 1915-1916 as the tomb of Aspalta; and the great pyramid on the "eastern" arm was the one which in 1916 was surmised to be "the tomb of one of the five kings of Ethiopia who ruled over Egypt."\*

On Thursday, October 26, 1916, the work of clearing the "western" front of the large pyramid (Pyramid I) was begun with a force of Egyptians and of men and boys from the local tribe of the Shaghia, (as shown in the illustration on p. 81). The mass of debris was enormous, consisting of drift sand and debris fallen from the pyramid. It was not until a month later, November 26, that this mass was cleared away. The chapel was found to be utterly destroyed; but on that day we opened the stairway leading down to the burial chambers. On December 5 the men found in the debris filling the

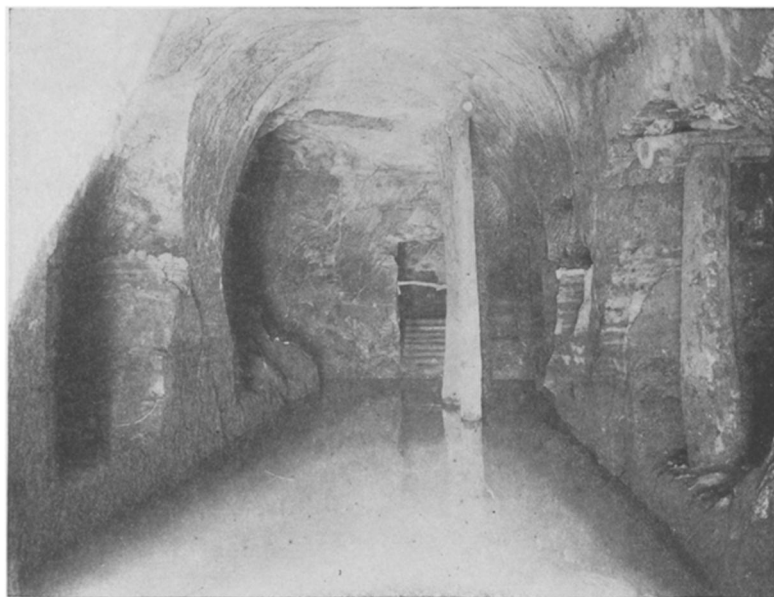
stairway a fragment of a stone figure on which was written the name of Tirhaqa.\* It was at once concluded that Pyramid I was in fact the tomb of that Tirhaqa who was one of the five kings of Ethiopia who ruled over Egypt, and this conclusion was fully borne out by later finds. The excavation of the stairway and the chambers met with great difficulties owing to the dangerous condition of the cracked walls and the half fallen roofs, to the water which covered the floors, and to the unexampled heat of the interior. Several times, after propping overhanging masses of rock we waited a few days to see what would happen. Once we had to wait three days to allow the interior to cool, and a month we waited for the water to fall; but in vain. The chambers were cut in the solid rock, a sort of

\* (II Kings, chapter 19) Sennacherib, before Jerusalem "heard say of Tirhakah, King of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come cut to fight against thee." The chapter describes the moment when "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold," and by a pestilence was forced to raise the siege as predicted by King Hezekiah's counsellor, the prophet Isaiah, in the beleaguered city.

\*Bulletin, June, 1917, p. 34.



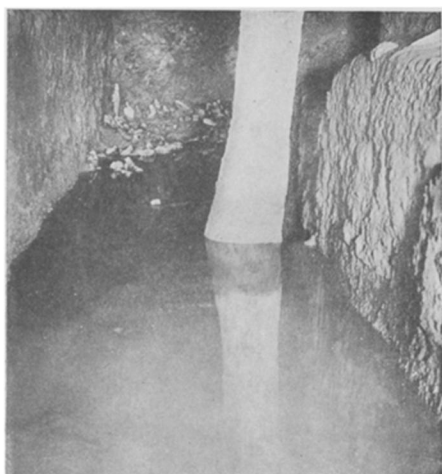
*Pyramid I. The tomb of Tirhaqa. Plan of underground chambers*



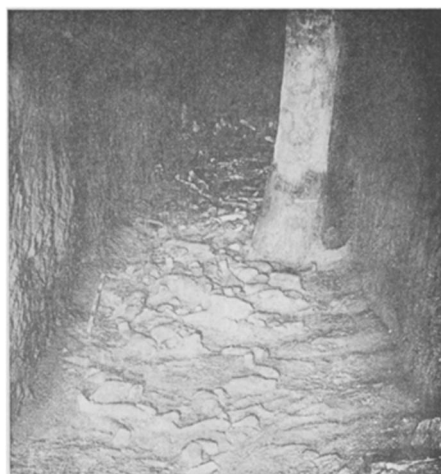
*Tomb of Tirhaqa. Pyramid I. Central aisle, looking inward  
After the excavations, when the water had reappeared*

micacious schist which deteriorates under the action of water. There was a great central hall divided into three aisles by two lines of three rectangular pillars each. The central aisle was approached by a small ante-chamber, which itself was entered by a flight of four steps leading up from the bottom of the great exterior stairway. On each side of the outer doorway a short flight of steps led up to a smaller doorway in the side wall of the exterior stairway. These two smaller doorways were the openings of a long corridor which was cut in the rock around the great hall and opened into the central aisle at the back by a doorway and a short flight of steps leading down. A large part of the work of removing the debris and the water was carried out through this corridor in order to avoid risking the lives of the workmen under the threaten-

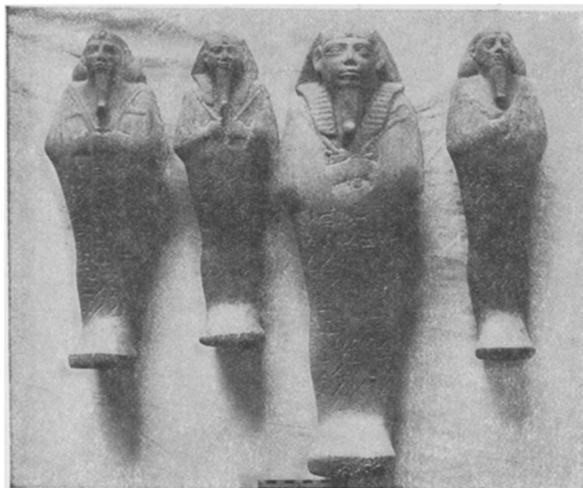
ing roof of the hall. Our architect, Mr. Robert Williams, experienced in more civilized methods of propping, was inclined to smile at our rough use of dom-logs; but Said Ahmed, the chief Egyptian foreman, vowed to sacrifice a sheep if we finished the work without accident; and whether because of this vow or because the place was not so dangerous as it looked, the excavation was finished in safety on March 6 (1917). About a month earlier, on February 12, we had reached the water-table and had begun to remove the earth which lay under the surface of the water. On that day, one of the Egyptians feeling about with his feet in the "western" end of the "southern" aisle discovered that a number of stone figures lay embedded in the floor debris of the aisle. A great effort was then made with the bailing,—a hard



*Northern aisle, partially bailed; figures appearing*



*Northern aisle, temporarily bailed dry*



*Stone shawabtis  
Tomb of Tirhaqa, Pyramid I*



*Serpentine shawabti. Height, 26 cm.*

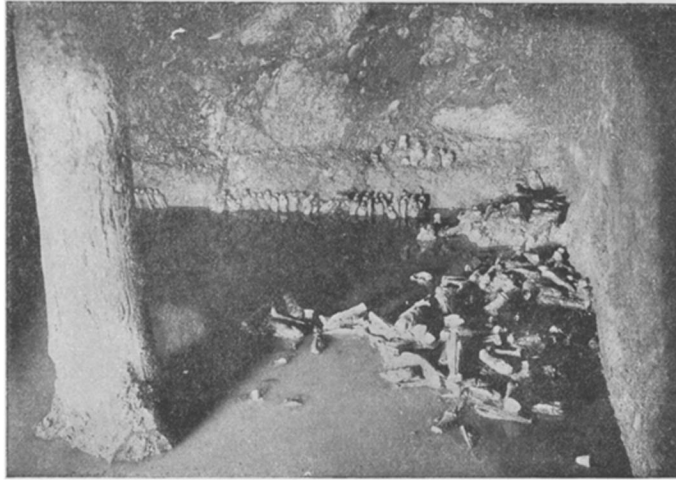
struggle, as the water never ceased running in as from some great spring. Finally we got the tomb temporarily dry and saw the floors of the two side aisles covered with over a thousand beautifully carved stone figures varying in height from 18 to 64 cm. Many of them had been ruined by soaking in water, but about 600 were in good condition. The coffin which had been made of wood, the mummy cases, and the mummy had been torn to pieces by thieves looking for gold, and had decayed except for a few fragments of bones, three pairs of inlaid eyes, and some bronze trappings. These remains were found partly in the antechamber and partly just outside the main entrance. We found along with them two canopic jars, several stone vessels, and a number of gold ornaments, the latter dropped unintentionally by the thieves.

While the excavation of the tomb of Tirhaqa was proceeding at intervals all winter, the rest of the men and sometimes all of them were employed

on the excavation of the pyramids on the "western" part of the horseshoe. An account of the exciting work of clearing these royal tombs, of the difficulties overcome, and of the great moments, would take far more space than this article allows. Object after object was found which bore the name of a king: now a gilded electrum ribbon, again a stone vase, or a cylindrical case of gold, an amulet of gold or of semi-precious stone, a stela, an altar, a granite coffin, a batch of magical figures of blue faience, a silver libation bowl, or an inscription on the walls of a burial chamber. Thus pyramid after pyramid was identified as the tomb of some known or some unknown king of Ethiopia. Tanutaman was found, two of whose statues we had recovered from the dumps of the Temple of Amon at Barkal. Senkamanseken was discovered to be the owner of Pyramid III. Three of his statues had also been found by us in the Barkal dumps, and he it was who had finished the Temple of Atlanarsa



*Gold ornaments: Above from tomb of Tirhaqa, Pyramid I;  
below from tomb of Nalma'aya, Pyramid XVIII  
The two gold rams' heads below on the left are brooches*



*Tomb of Senkamanseken. Pyramid III  
Second chamber, "Southern" end, magical figures appearing from the water*

which we excavated at Barkal, and whose name was inserted on the great granite altar of that temple (now the property of the Museum). The floors of his burial chambers at Nuri were also covered with water but not so deeply as the floors of the Tirhaqa chambers; and one of the most interesting of sights was his second chamber, whose walls were inscribed with the "negative confession" from the Book of the Dead, and whose "south" wall was still lined with magical figures standing up to their waists in water. Amtalqa, whose headless statue was found by Lepsius at Merawi, was buried in Pyramid IX. Harsiotef and Nastasan, whose stelæ are in Cairo, were identified with Pyramids XIII and XV, and other names were found which had never before been read by modern eyes on any monument, lost to human knowledge for over a thousand years. All the nineteen pyramids which lay on the curve of the horseshoe and in the great line of the "western" arm, were the

tombs of kings. At the end of 1916-1917, and during the campaign of 1917-1918, we excavated the small pyramids beside Pyramid I on the "eastern" arm, which we call the main ridge. On this main ridge we found the tombs of fifty-three royal ladies, queens, and princesses, some of whom, like the kings, were already known and some of whom were now discovered for the first time. The curious fact thus appears that Tirhaqa, the first and greatest of the Nuri kings, and the queens of all the periods there represented, were buried on the "eastern" part of the knoll, while all the kings after Tirhaqa were buried on the "western" part. The chapels and the entrances of all these tombs are turned to the "west," the land of Amenti, the land of Osiris, god of the dead.

All the pyramids at Nuri were of the slender type, with steep sides inclined at an angle of about  $68^{\circ}$  to the horizontal, quite different in aspect from the massive squat pyramids of Giza. Each stood in a



*Small blue faience shawabti of Senkamanseken*

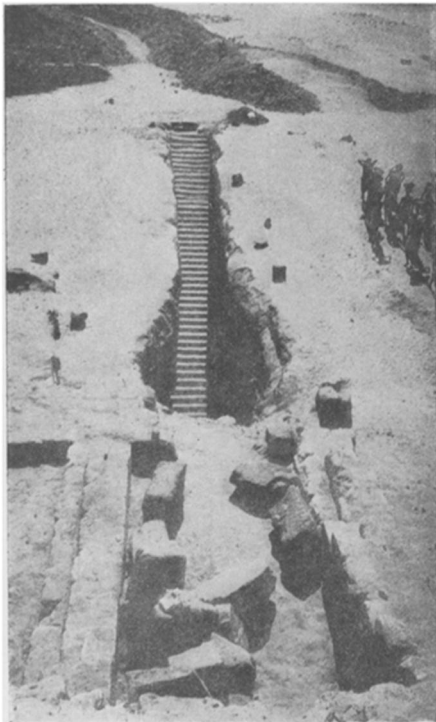




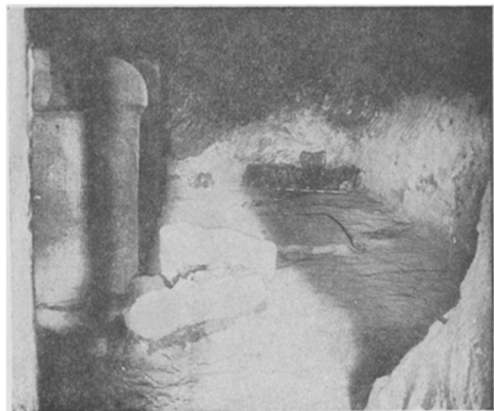
*Tombs of Madiḳani and Amantekaya; showing denuded pyramid, chapel, enclosing wall and stairway  
Looking down from Pyramid I*

small enclosure bounded by a low wall and had an offering chapel consisting of a single room placed against the "western" face. The chapel was roofed with two rows of large stone slabs, which leaned against each other from the opposite walls, thus forming a sort of arch. In the middle of the "eastern" end of the chapel a stela was set in the face of the pyramid, and on the floor in front of the stela two offering stands were placed and a flat altar resting on a stone pillar. Out in front of the chapel a long stairway, open at the top, descended

from the "west" to a doorway opening into a series of two or three burial chambers (A, B, and C) hollowed in the solid rock under the chapel and the pyramid. In the innermost chamber the coffin, usually of wood, but in two cases of granite, had been placed on a stone bench, and in this the mummy, enclosed in two or three mummy cases. The fingers and toes of the mummy had been cased in gold, and the body had borne a heart scarab and many ornaments as in Egypt. Around the walls of this room, and sometimes of Room B also, the small magical figures called *shawwabt* ("answerer") were ranged in rows, and these were often found in place. There had also been wooden boxes inlaid with colored stones and containing alabaster ointment jars, gold ointment sticks, silver mirrors, gold cups and vessels, silver bowls, and other valuable objects. The pottery seems to have been set mainly in Rooms B and A. After the burial the outer doorway was blocked with rough masonry and the stairway filled in with the broken rock taken out during the excavation of the stairway and the chambers. This debris had been piled on

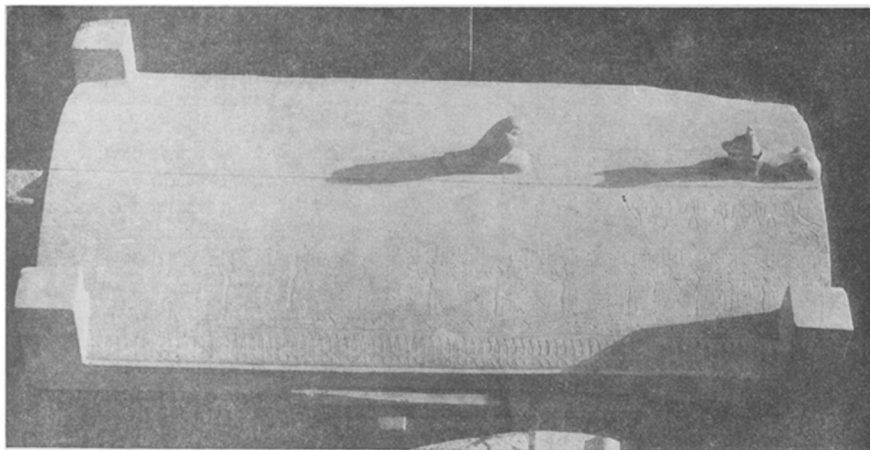


*Chapel and stairway, seen from the Pyramid  
Looking down to "West"*



*Granite coffin and shawwabtis in position*

*Tomb of Anlaman, Pyramid VI*



*Lid of granite coffin of Aspalta, Pyramid VIII*



*Doorblock of tomb of Aspalta, showing thieves' entrance above and bronze vessels left on floor at time of burial*

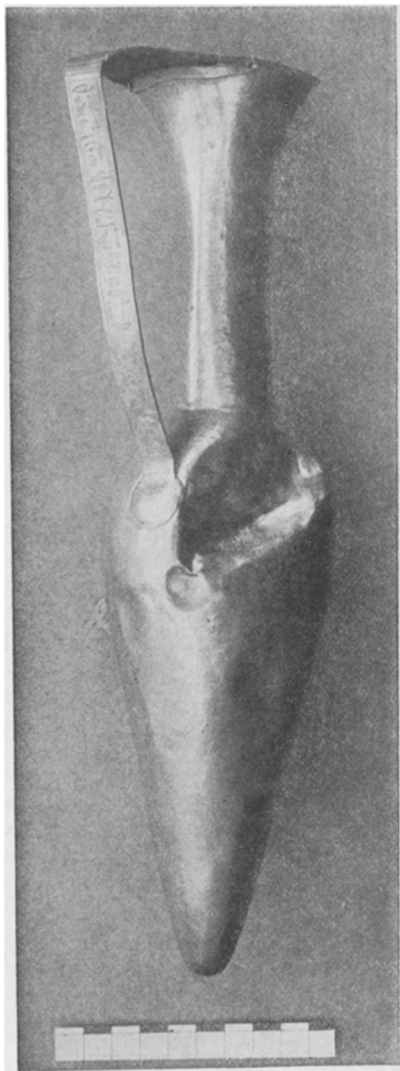
each side of the "western" end of the stairway, and some of it was always left over after filling the stairway. Even now after all these centuries the two low mounds can still be seen at the end of the stairway, and guided us more than once to the entrance.

Such was the original condition; but each of the pyramids had been used as a quarry for stone and its burial chambers had been repeatedly robbed. The thieves seem to have sought only for gold and to have been regardless of what they broke and trampled under foot. In the abundance which they found they carelessly dropped some of the gold ornaments in almost every tomb and left gold leaf scattered through all the rooms. I came to the conclusion that there had been a time soon after the abandonment of the cemetery (about 300-250 B. C.), when tomb after tomb was cleared out in a perfect orgy of treasure-hunting.

From this account, the hope of finding much of value might seem very small; but there was something in every tomb, and the end of the work left us with a very satisfactory collection. These objects were, moreover, entirely the work of royal craftsmen



*Tomb of Aspalta, Room B. Objects dropped by plunderers*  
*From the left: Silver libation bowl, gold jug, silver basin, gold vase-lid with gold chain attached*



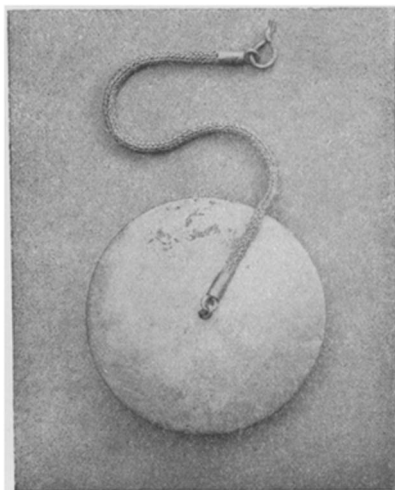
*Tomb of Aspalta. Gold jug*

and represent all that will ever be recovered of these classes of objects from this period of Ethiopian history. For we have excavated the tombs of *all the kings and queens of Ethiopia* who lived after Tirhaqa, except the four kings and their queens who are buried in our concession at Kurru. Leaving aside all the other finds, the inscribed objects alone were sufficient to identify every one of the twenty kings and twenty-five of the fifty-three royal ladies buried at Nuri. The earliest generation of craftsmen or schools of craftsmen,—the sculptors, the faience-workers, the gold-and silver-smiths, the potters, the makers of stone vessels, the masons, and the scribes,—all took the traditions of their crafts from the Egyptian schools and were probably themselves Egyptians. The objects which they made are indistinguishable in form and technique from the objects made in the corresponding period in Egypt (665-650 B. C.). Each subsequent set of workmen must have learned their

crafts from the preceding set, producing, of course, from time to time new methods and new styles, and either losing or gaining in skill and in their hold on the early traditions. Thus of the various craftsmen who worked for any one king, some must have continued to work under his successor, some would have died and handed on their traditions through their apprentices, and some would have been supplanted by new masters of their crafts. In other words, it may be assumed that the archaeological group of each king contained examples of the work of some craftsmen who had worked for his predecessor and of some who were to work for his successor, but was in itself a unique group, the production of a set of men who lived contemporaneously only under that one king. Thus, by a careful comparison, it should be possible to link up these twenty groups as a continuous series of overlapping units, and to set the names of the corresponding rulers of the country in the same order.

In thus establishing the list of the kings of Ethiopia in their chronological order the initial step was the division of all the pyramids into four groups (*a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*) each characterized by peculiarities of masonry and plan and each showing such a technical advance over the other as to leave no doubt as to the order of the groups. Group *a* contained the pyramids of Tirhaqa and Tanutaman, and group *d* exhibited the nearest approach to the masonry and plan of the pyramids of the Meroitic period, which came after the Ethiopian period. An examination of the stelæ, altars, inscriptions, faience figures, stone vessels, gold and silver ornaments, and other objects confirmed the division into four groups in the order already determined, and indicated the order of the pyramids in each group.

At this point in the course of the field work, the discovery was made that a sacrificial foundation deposit had been made under each of the four corners of most of the pyramids, as follows: One pyramid of group *a*, all the pyramids of groups *b*



*Tomb of Aspalta. Gold vase-lid with chain*



*The discovery of the foundation deposit at Pyramid II  
On the left the "Northwest" corner of the second pyramid; on the right the foundation course of  
the first pyramid with one stone removed to show the foundation deposit underneath*

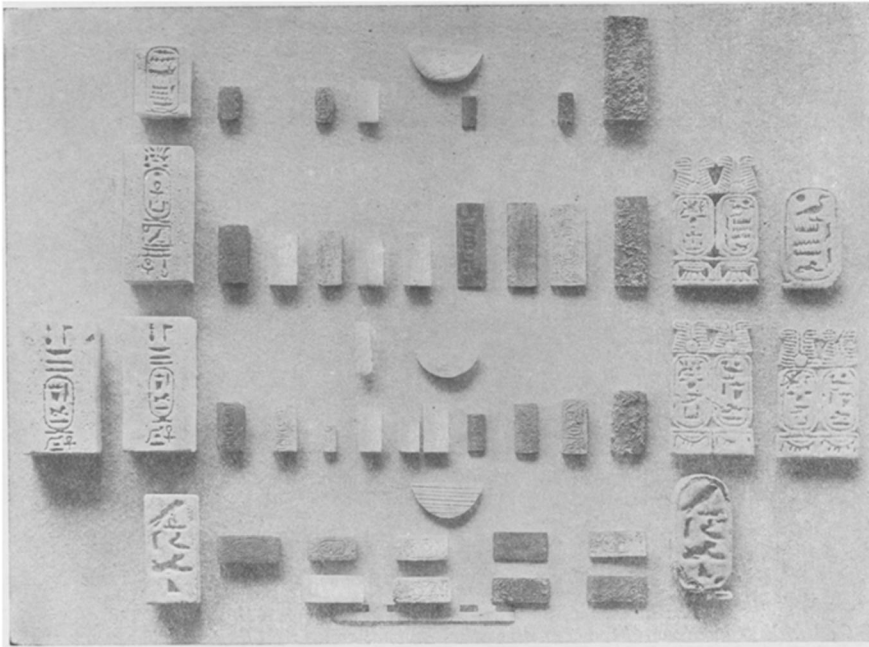


*Circular Foundation deposit. Queen's Pyramid XLVII  
Bones of the sacrifice, and pottery*



*Inscribed blue faience cups  
Foundation deposit of Anlaman, Pyramid VI*

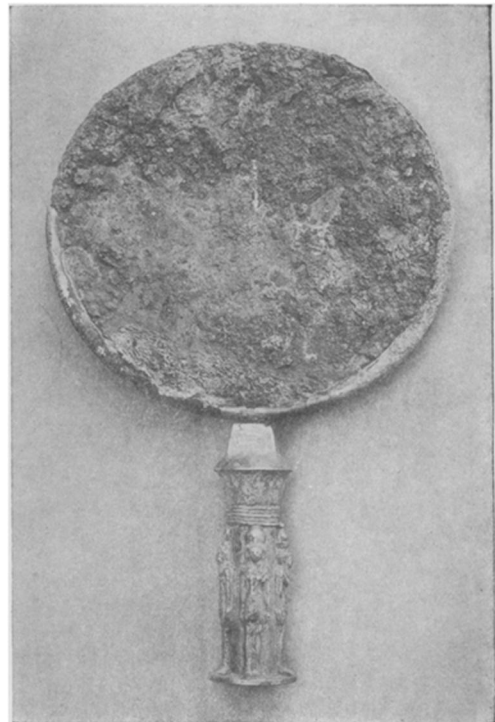
and c, and all but three of the pyramids of group *d*. Foundation deposits had never before been found under pyramids. We had already searched for them at Nuri itself, but hampered by the doubt as to their existence, by ignorance of their position, and by fear of damaging to no purpose the masonry of the pyramids, we had failed to find them. At the very end of the season of 1916-1917, when I had already set the date of our departure for Egypt, one of the workmen clearing the corner of Pyramid II (Astabarqaman) to enable Mr. Williams to make a plan of that pyramid, accidentally broke through into a cavity containing a sacrificial foundation deposit. This pyramid had been built originally about 28 meters square on shallow foundations so that the "northern" side had either cracked or fallen; and the whole pyramid had been taken down and rebuilt on more solid, deeper foundations, but on a smaller scale (about 27 meters square). The outer row of stones of the foundation course of the older pyramid had been left in place, and our workman engaged on the second pyramid broke through from the inside into the deposit covered by the "northwestern" corner of the first pyramid. With this assurance of the existence of the deposits and this indication of their position, the finding of the other deposits was a simple matter. I sent off Mr. Williams, the architect, and Mrs. Symons, the secretary, at the appointed time, while Mr. Kemp, the recorder, Mrs. Reisner, who was helping with the care of the antiquities, my daughter and I remained until the 10th of May and finished up the recording of the foundation deposits. Fortunately the weather held unusually cool for the Sudan, although we were well inside the tropical zone.



*Tablets from foundation deposits of Pyramids III, VI, VIII, and IX, all inscribed with the name of the king. From left to right, blue faience, red jasper, crystal, lapis lazuli, alabaster, blue Amazon stone, gold, electrum, silver, bronze and blue faience*



*Granite stela of Queen Bathuly, wife of Harsiotef. Approaching the Meroitic in style. Height, 62 cm.*



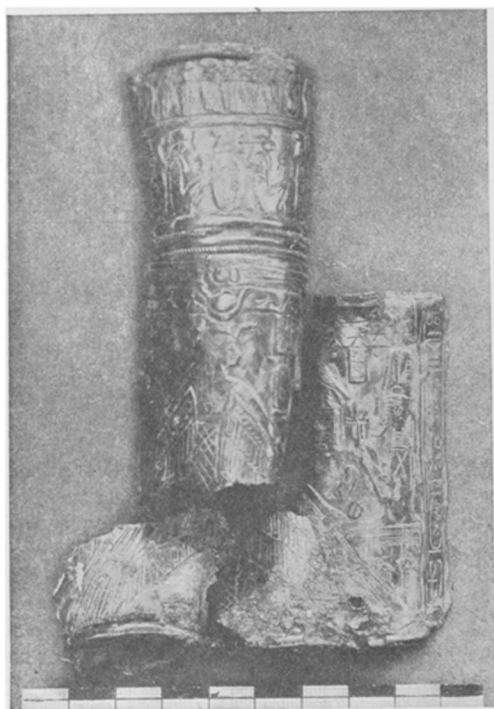
*Bronze mirror, with silver handle, of King Nastasan, Pyramid XV*



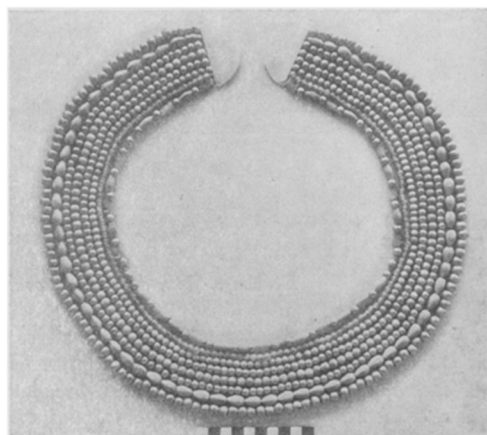
*Alabaster ape's head, lid of canopic jar,  
tomb of "the great Queen Itakhibaskan,"  
time of Tirhaqa*



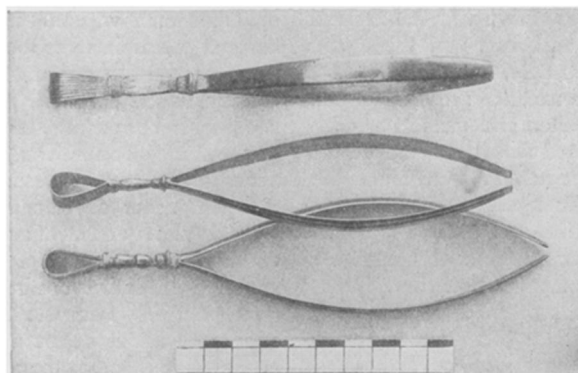
*Figures and models of bricks, made of mud, and a blue  
faience dad-sign, from the exterior foundation  
deposits of Pyramid VI  
Height of figures, ca. 21 cm.*



*Cylindrical sheath of gold, broken but complete,  
from tomb of Queen Madihani. Height, ca. 13 cm.*

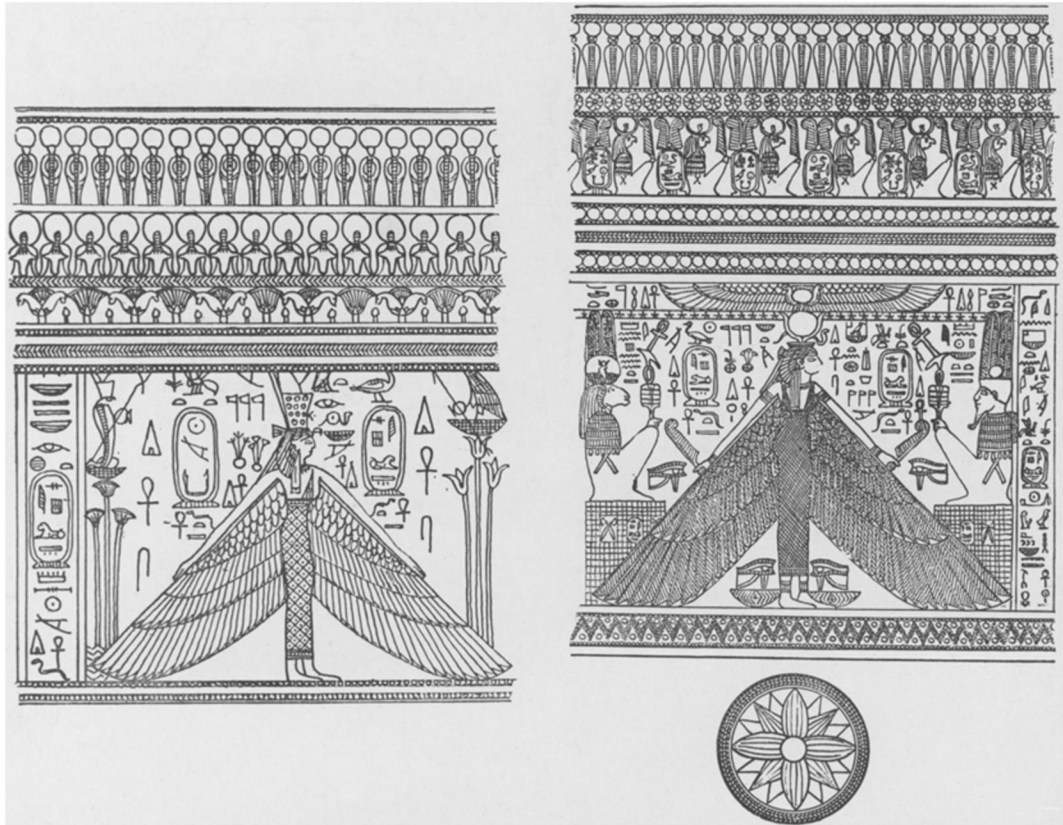


*Necklace of gold, amethyst and Amazon stone,  
from tomb of Aspelta, Pyramid VIII, Room B*



*Gold tweezers, from tomb of Aspelta, Pyramid VIII*





*Drawings of the designs on two gold cylinders, from the tomb of Aspalta*

The contents of the deposits varied, like all else, from group to group and from pyramid to pyramid. The earlier cavities were square and the later circular, decreasing in size. All the cavities contained, lying on the top, the skull and one fore-quarter of a sacrificial calf or young bull. There were also vessels of pottery, or models of such vessels, and a few stone implements (bread-grinder and rubbing stone, mortar and pestle) which varied from pyramid to pyramid. In the deposits of group *b* there were also from eighteen to twenty faience cups, and in the deposits of the two earliest pyramids these cups were inscribed with the name of the king and of a god who loved him. Below, the floor of the cavity was strewn with tablets and model tools of bronze and iron. In the earlier deposits there were tablets only, but these were of gold, electrum, silver, bronze, faience, red jasper, crystal, lapis lazuli, alabaster, and malachite, each one of which was inscribed with the name of the king. In the *c*-group the tablets were much the same, but only the faience tablets were inscribed. In the *d*-group, except for one faience tablet in each deposit of Pyramid XI, none of the tablets were inscribed; but in compensation the deposits of this group contained models of various tools which in the earlier pyramids (XI and XII) were of bronze and in the later pyramids (XIII and XIV) of both bronze and iron. The evidence offered

by the changing character of these deposits and their contents confirmed fully the conclusions already obtained regarding the chronological sequence of the kings.

It is with the names of these long forgotten kings and queens that we have now filled out the four centuries after the death of Tanutaman. But before Tanutaman, the life of the Ethiopian monarchy had been only a short one, consisting of the reigns of Kashta, Piankhy I, Shabaka, Shabataka, and then our Tirhaqa, a period of only about eighty years. The royal cemetery at Nuri was founded by Tirhaqa. His pyramid, the largest of all, was the first king's pyramid to be built on the site, and that of Tanutaman was the second. Henceforth, the kings of Ethiopia were to rule only over their own land, the most barren part of the Nile valley, a country which owed its material prosperity to its geographical position as the land of the trade routes between Egypt and Central Africa and to the gold-mines of its eastern desert. The native negroid race had never developed either its trade or any industry worthy of mention and owed their cultural position to the Egyptian immigrants and to the imported Egyptian civilization. The early kings sprang certainly from the Egyptianized ruling class and had without doubt a large portion of Lybian or Egyptian blood in their veins. After the expulsion of Tanutaman from Egypt, the kings of Ethiopia



*Beginning of excavation of Pyramid I, tomb of Tirhaqa. The mass of debris seen from the "Northwest"  
(Compare p. 70)*

were unable to exercise any authority over Egypt except quite temporarily over the provinces south of Thebes. Nevertheless, they all claimed the fivefold titulary of the kings of Egypt until in the days of Harsiotef and the other kings of the later *d*-group, the very names used with three of the five titles became stereotyped and passed as parts of the titles from king to king. One king succeeded another, built temples, endowed the offerings of the gods, suffered under the intrigues of courtiers and priests, and waged his petty wars with the negro tribes on the south or with the nomads of the eastern and the western deserts. Each one gave such heed as profited him to the priest-made oracles of Amon-Ra of Gebel Barkal, married him a queen from his own family, gave his mother honored burial at Nuri, built himself a pyramid in the same field, died, and was buried with his fathers. The Egypto-Lybian elements in the royal family and in the ruling class were gradually replaced by the native negroid elements, probably through climatic influences and intermarriage. The deadening effects of this racial change appear in the gradual decline of all the arts and crafts. Later, after the death of Nastasan, there was a new influx of people from Egypt and a revival of the arts in the Græco-Egyptian forms which we call Meroitic. But the native influence continued, in spite of this apparent set-back, and the language of the people replaced the Egyptian even in the royal inscriptions. The native language was first written in a sort of bastard hieroglyphics, and finally in a cursive alphabet adapted from these hieroglyphics, the so-called Meroitic script.

Thus summarized, the history of Ethiopia may seem the duller of affairs. But the stelæ found at Barkal give us certain details of the reigns of Tanutaman, Aspalta, Harsiotef, and Nastasan, which add a human interest to these names. As all the other kings of Ethiopia undoubtedly left similar records at the great temple of Amon-Ra at Gebel Barkal, there must once have been fifteen

or twenty more of these stelæ which have not yet been found. It may, therefore, be hoped by continuing the excavations in that temple to find further records which will enliven our knowledge of many another king of Ethiopia. With the material now at hand, all the broad outlines have been recovered which in the history of Ethiopia add to human knowledge another example of the physical basis of political power and of the dependence of the exploitation of that power on racial capabilities, another example of the organization of a theocratic state and of the practical effect of such an organization on human affairs.

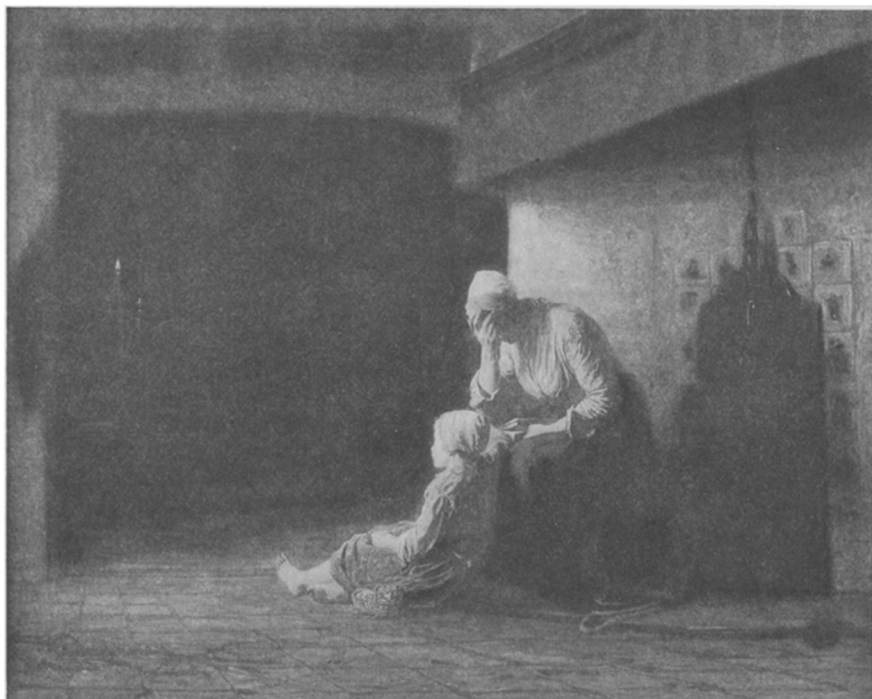
Set in this historical background, the collections of objects found at Nuri present the whole course of the development of the arts and crafts of Ethiopia over a period of four centuries.\* But far more than this, if the objects now buried in the fourteen royal

\* The share of the Museum in the finds at Nuri will afford a complete representation of this development. From Pyramid I, the tomb of Tirhaqa, the funerary figures of alabaster, serpentine, and several kinds of hard stone, including speckled granite, in all over a thousand in number, varying in type of face and costume, form, in Dr. Reisner's words, "a really great group of stone sculpture, of a type at present lacking in the Museum collection." Five of these figures are illustrated on p. 72. The share of the Museum will also include either the coffin of Aspalta, illustrated on p. 75, or the almost exactly similar one of Aspalta's father, Anlaman; and either the three inscribed chambers of the tomb of Aspalta or the inscribed chamber of his mother, Queen Nansalsa. These chambers are rooms lined with sandstone blocks which may be removed and set up in one of the galleries of the Museum. It was in the second chamber of Aspalta that were found the necklace and tweezers illustrated on p. 79, with the jug, vase-lid, and other objects illustrated on pp. 75 and 76. In the third chamber were found fifty of the finest blue-glazed shawwabtis that have ever been discovered. The chamber of Nansalsa is of fine hard white sandstone and is carved on all four sides with religious scenes and inscriptions, all of extremely good Egyptian work. Of this chamber Dr. Reisner writes: "A fine museum specimen of Egyptian sculpture of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, of which very few museums have any examples. The value of this alone repays our year's work." Of three granite altars allotted to the Museum one is from the tomb of Queen Itakhibaskan, where was found the ape's head from a canopic jar pictured on p. 79. Beside the stela of Bathily, illustrated on p. 78, the Museum will receive stelæ of Anlaman, Aspalta, and other kings, as well as a number of royal statues. The list of works of the goldsmiths assigned to the Museum is also very large. A touch of the nature that makes the whole world kin appears in the inscription upon a silver libation cup: "Greetings to ye, O abundant good waters which ward off all evil from the child of the Sun, Nalma'aya." The silver handle of the mirror of Nastasan, illustrated on p. 78, encloses the lower half of the circular bronze plate in two silver arms. The shaft represents a papyrus column with a finely-carved capital. Four figures, also finely carved, representing Amon-Ra, Hathor, Horus and Isis, stand with their backs to the column. The base is a heavy disk with a rosette pattern on the under side.



tombs at Kurru be added, then *these are all the remains which mankind is ever likely to recover of most of the Ethiopian crafts of this period.* Examples of the sculpture, it is true, will probably be found in the temples at Barkal and elsewhere ; but the condition of the smaller private tombs already excavated shows that nothing is to be hoped from these. The series of gold objects, of foundation deposits, and

above all, of the shawwabtis can never be duplicated. Aside from the historical importance of these figures, a large number of them possess artistic merits of no small value. The stone figures of Tirhaqa are unique for this period, and the faience figures of Senkamanseken, Aspalta, and some of the early queens are unsurpassed by anything of the same sort found in Egypt. G. A. R.



*De dag voor het Scheiden*

Gift of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln

*Jozef Israëls (1824-1911)*

### The Day before the Parting

THE picture represents a cottage interior. In the background, dimly seen, a coffin supported on two chairs and covered with a pall is faintly illuminated by a single altar candle. In the foreground, in a strong light, a woman is seated against the chimney-breast under a green curtain, with a child at her feet. She holds in her left hand a book in which her thumb keeps the place, and leaning forward, rests her face, red with weeping, upon her right hand. The child is looking at the coffin, her right arm stretched across her mother's knee, her left hand in her lap upon the cord of a doll's cradle at her side. Both mother and daughter are barefoot. The great chain over the fireplace hangs idle. The hearth with its iron back bordered with blue tiles is empty. A wood basket is upturned at the woman's side, and a few faggots are still strewn along the red-tiled floor.

Jozef Israëls was unconnected with any school, and totally immersed in his own problems. Yet he became a technician of a surprising order, moved by his innate sympathy for the scenes of peasant life from which he drew most of his subjects. The narrative element in his pictures distinguishes him from J. F. Millet, also painter of peasants. Israëls might be called the Robert Burns of modern Dutch painting. In 1906, five years before his death, he declared that this picture had made his reputation, "I painted it in 1860 (he was then 36)—I know it was then, because it was the year before I was engaged. It was made '*pour la gloire*.' It was exhibited in Rotterdam in 1862, and got the gold medal, the last year that medal was given." "There is good color in that picture ; I could do no better — some people say I cannot now do so well."

A water-color sketch of this subject was made by Israëls, and many years afterwards he painted the small replica formerly owned by Mr. Alexander Young of Knightsbridge, England.